

MONTHLY BULLETIN

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE

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PENNSYLVANIA SHOULDERS ITS BURDEN

By F. Richard Stilwell, Field Director, State Emergency Relief Board

FOUR hundred thousand Pennsylvania families have spent their last dollar and are living on public funds. Of the 9,000,000 citizens of this State, 2,000,000 are destitute, more than one person in every five. These figures do not include the many families and dependents of part time workers, who are today barely existing on wages for one or two days work per week.

The usual grant given to a totally destitute family is between \$2.00 and \$3.00 a week. Shall we assume, though it is more than doubtful, that this is adequate for food? It leaves nothing whatever for other basic needs—a place to sleep, a roof to keep out rain and cold, clothing, shoes.

So far the State Emergency Relief Board has been unable to grant relief for shelter. Money for rent from private agencies is practically exhausted. Unpaid rent in Pennsylvania runs into the millions. Property owners unable to keep up repairs, unable to pay their taxes or interest on investments, are today recipients of charity. The lack of provision for necessary clothing, fuel, light, water, household supplies and medical care is tragic beyond description.

Methods of reaching the unemployed vary. Federal funds and the last State appropriation of \$12,000,000 are being administered through the sixty-seven County Boards appointed by the State Emergency Relief Board. These Boards are using local agencies to the fullest possible extent. All the private family agencies, district committees and Poor Boards are cooperating with the County Boards.

As in similar emergencies of fire, flood and famine, there has been as yet little time to organize adequate machinery of distribution. Taxpayers resent administrative costs, and yet without organized planning it is not possible to reach the destitute men, women and children for whom this money is granted.

The first State appropriation of \$10,000,000, December 28, 1931, was administered entirely through the 424 poor districts in the State. There was no provision for State supervision or uniformity of method. Several counties developed good relief programs. The sudden avalanche of work and lack of trained workers attached to Poor Boards made it difficult for most of them to grasp conditions in the families of the unemployed. Traditional

policies and grants of fixed amounts failed to meet the emergency needs of Bill Jones, his wife and four children for shelter and shoes. In several counties people had to walk many miles to make application, had to wait in crowded rooms with other discouraged people and had to return again and again to beg for help. The lack of intelligent community organization added great hardship to the lives of hundreds of self-respecting people who had in the past contributed to the wealth of Pennsylvania. It is encouraging to note that today the State Emergency Relief Board is making rapid strides in improving the local administration of emergency relief.

Expenditures in Pennsylvania for unemployment relief in 1932 from public funds—local, State and Federal—totalled more than \$34,000,000. Additional funds estimated at an equal amount were spent by industries, almshouses, private agencies, grants from school teachers, labor unions, etc. This would bring the total expenditures for unemployment relief from all sources in Pennsylvania for 1932 to over \$60,000,000.

Family life has been especially affected. Many families have been broken and parents forced to give up their children because of lack of employment for the breadwinner. The burden of uncertainty of what will happen to a man's family, the resultant worry and the loss of self respect is as serious a part of the problem as the wage loss.

Heads of the Welfare Department bureaus testify to the havoc wrought in their special fields. The unprecedented number of suicides daily reported in the press is a tragic index of the mental suffering and desperation involved. There were 129 more suicides in Pennsylvania in 1931 than in the previous year. Dr. William C. Sandy, director of the Bureau of Mental Health, calls attention to the sinister results of extreme deprivation on the child. "Undernourishment, malnutrition, lack of opportunity and other complications in children are likely to result in future illness, nervousness and other handicapping conditions in adult life."

An unvaried diet of potatoes, tea and white bread is undermining the health of our next generation, according to Miss Mary S. Labaree, director of the Bureau of Children. "Much of Pennsylvania's burden today is being borne by its children, according to reports from

THE 25TH ANNUAL

meeting of the Pennsylvania Conference on Social Welfare, to be held in the Sterling Hotel, Wilkes-Barre, Feb. 22-25, will offer a well planned program embracing all branches of social service endeavor. Board members and staff members of social agencies throughout the State should avail themselves of the excellent opportunity for additional training by enrolling in the Institutes. The agenda fairly bristles with outstanding leaders. Persons desiring a copy of the program or additional information should write to H. A. Waldkoenig, Secretary, 620 Investment Building, Pittsburgh.

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ALICE F. LIVERIGHT *Secretary of Welfare*
GERTRUDE MARVIN WILLIAMS *Editor*
JOHN H. DAY *Business Manager*

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EDITORIAL

By Alice F. Liveright, Secretary of Welfare

GOVERNOR PINCHOT'S budget for 1933-35 allots \$19,000,000 to State-owned institutions; \$7,000,000 to State-aided hospitals, and \$634,700 to State-aided homes. Of the \$600,000 appropriated to the Welfare Department, \$315,400 is for salaries, of which about 40 per cent goes to field workers. These field workers supervise the State-aided institutions. Any curtailment of this allowance for field service would imperil the supervision of the vastly larger sum of nearly eight million dollars spent on hospitals and homes.

Many of these institutions are excellent, requiring little advice and supervision. Many others are remote, isolated, conducted for personal profit—or perpetuating outmoded plans of care. Shall no one in this great State concern himself about these wards of the State—children from broken homes, the sick, the aged, the crippled? The many calls made upon the Department for advice concerning problems of organization, analysis and development of welfare programs indicate the grateful reaction to the services of our field staff.

A city asks advice about its Welfare Department. Our impersonal, non-political experts tell the truth. The Welfare Department is reorganized. The hospital, operating even below requirements of good service, is not further curtailed—care for the aged does not suffer. We stepped in “on call”—we stepped out as soon as the facts were gathered and reported!

A county wants to know what its program for children should be. What is the most economical method of caring for children in the long run, in an institution or in private homes? Shall a county home be built—how large? Or, shall it be built at all? Whatever the cost for running expenses, there are in the case of the institution additional charges for capital outlay. Here are the facts, let the county decide!

Costs of State government are far less than costs of local government. Our field service to local districts saves local governments large sums of money through our advice and inspection service. Our field staff sees Pennsylvania as a whole. Each district considers its case unique. Our advice to the counties brings a balanced, impartial attitude to bear. Our advice is not mandatory. The acceptance is optional. Results show that it is largely acceptable. Money unspent is not considered as money saved. It is hard to compute these savings. But Pennsylvania's burdens for *dependents* would be greatly increased without our service concerning “what not to do” and “how to do it.”

WHERE TO?

WHAT makes life today so different from the world of our childhood? A group of distinguished social scientists have attempted to answer this question in a report of 1,663 pages. “Recent Social Trends” is the result of three years’ work by a research committee appointed by President Hoover. Dr. Wesley C. Mitchell, the Columbia University economist, served as chairman, and William F. Ogburn, Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, as director of research. Thirteen closely printed pages of names of collaborators indicate that the study is a composite of the most representative modern thought on social problems. It will undoubtedly influence all welfare programs, both public and private. It has been received with unprecedented interest. The *New York Times* issued the introductory report of 40,000 words as a special supplement. The report in two volumes is published by McGraw-Hill.

Dealing with public welfare and social work the report emphasizes the tendency of government to expand and to administer functions formerly left to private agencies. In the present century the growth of the services of social work has proceeded through social inventiveness to new standards transcending earlier conceptions. Governments have been extending their functions into these fields. More than two-thirds of the States have reorganized State boards or departments into State systems of public welfare, dealing with child welfare, widowed mothers, the poor, the aged and infirm, the physically handicapped, and the subnormal.

Most of these problems have been deposited at the doorstep of Government by fundamental changes in modern society, such as industrialism, desertion of rural communities and concentration around the big cities. Having accepted these problems Government is suddenly forced, says the report, to appreciate its own need of a “newly developed efficiency in public administration and the recent technical advances of professional social work.”

In discussing the question as to how far the trend to “transfer private social work to governmental auspices” will continue, the report comments: “The further growth of public welfare activities is to be expected, particularly because of the range of problems which are dealt with in other countries through social insurance.”

Regarding poverty not as a dispensation of providence but as a result of social maladjustment, the report refers to the “prevention of poverty on a large scale” as a possibility for the future. The committee made no effort to analyze the unemployment situation. They do, however, emphasize the necessity for “making more adequate provision for social case work treatment which will have preventive, corrective and relief aspects” and of providing more adequate relief in general. They enforce this recommendation with a solemn warning against the dangers of “a prolongation of a policy of drift.” Their summing up, coming as it does from a governmental committee, is both impressive and sinister:

“Unless there can be a more impressive integration of social skills and fusing of social purposes there can be no assurance that these alternatives (dictatorial systems) with their accompaniments of violent revolution, dark periods of serious repression of libertarian and democratic forms, the proscription and loss of many useful elements in the present productive system, can be averted.”

The report piques the reader's interest with provocative captions on our use of leisure, the influence of inventions, especially the automobile, and changes in family life. Copies of the supplemental report may be obtained by writing to this Department.

ONLY 10 MEN WORKING IN A POPULATION OF 2,000

CALLED to Washington to testify in regard to unemployment relief before the La Follette-Costigan Committee, Mrs. Helen Glenn Tyson, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Welfare, presented a statement impressive in its restraint. It was quoted at length by the press of Philadelphia, New York and other cities.

Mr. Stilwell's article in this issue presents the administrative side of the problem, the amount of money available, effects on taxpayers, how relief is distributed, what the State Emergency Relief Board members are learning as they go along. Mrs. Tyson's testimony stresses the human angle, and what this tragedy of prolonged unemployment is meaning not to thousands but to millions of honest, reputable Pennsylvania citizens.

"In April, 1930," she told the committee "the U. S. Census figures showed 325,402 workers unemployed in Pennsylvania. In November, 1932, 1,099,841 workers were unemployed. In the State as a whole about 30 per cent of the workers are unemployed. Sixteen counties, principally the larger industrial and coal mining counties, showed 30 to 39 per cent of their workers unemployed.

"Last May I reported to this committee that we estimated that some 250,000 families in Pennsylvania were on relief. In December, 1932, seven months later, 397,279 families were receiving relief.

"Nowhere in the State today is relief adequate. The usual weekly family grant for food in December was between \$2 and \$4. The maximum grant is \$4.50. In Pittsburgh 90 cents a week per individual is given."

The Chairman: "Will you explain what could be purchased for 90 cents a week in Pittsburgh? Of what does the diet of these individuals consist?"

Mrs. Tyson: "It is unquestionably a low starchy diet. It lacks the vitamins which are essential to growth in school children. A person on a minimum amount inevitably chooses bulky filling foods. According to Dr. Theodore B. Appel, Secretary of Health, in the fourth class school districts alone, where there are 800,000 children, 20 per cent to 40 per cent have been reported as malnourished and 75 per cent suffering from some form of physical defect. When men are offered work, they frequently are too weak to do it. One of the large industrialists in Pittsburgh, whose plant was opened recently, stated confidentially that they were finding many men unable to do a full day's work."

Asked to define "a decent level of relief" Mrs. Tyson said, "In the old days, in social work, we regarded as a decent level of relief a grant that would permit an individual to live like his neighbors, who were living also on a minimum necessity level; that is, to pay his rent, to buy food that would keep his family in health and decency; to buy clothing, fuel and light.

"In our Mothers' Assistance Fund in Pennsylvania, under which about 8,000 widows' families are supported, the present grant is \$35 per month per family. Those people are living at a minimum level, but on a decent level in the sense that the children are well. They pay rent. They go to free clinics, but pay for medicine. They buy their clothing and do not have to wear discarded clothing. I would say, if you added a man to that group, a \$40 a month level would be a minimum level."

Mrs. Tyson ended her testimony with a description of a steel town in Western Pennsylvania which makes a grim and unforgettable picture.

"The town has a population of 2,000. One thousand five hundred people are on relief, 1,800 are receiving Government flour through the Red Cross. *Only ten men are working out of a population of 2,000.* Practically none have worked for two years since the pipe mill has been closed down. Many have not worked for three years since other steel plants closed. Practically no coal has been mined within a radius of seven miles in the last ten years. The town physician is devoted in his service to the people without pay. The Borough itself is bankrupt. No taxes are coming in. No rents are being paid in the town. One man, who owns five homes and has a large sum of money loaned to other home owners, is on relief.

"Large groups of the unemployed stand around listlessly. Almost all the school children need milk, which is distributed free by the Public Health nurse. Kerosene lamps are used for lighting purposes and are supplied by the Borough. The Catholic Priest said that the men have been half-starved for so long that they have no spirit left. When the question was raised as to how the men put in their time, the Burgess replied, 'They spend it wondering when the steel mill will open.' There is no prospect of the mill being opened."

Dr. B. L. Scott, Director of the Bureau of Restoration, Pennsylvania Department of Welfare, has been named chairman of the Campaign Committee against Unfair Competition of Prison-made Products. Its purpose is to establish in each state which does not have a state's-use law for prison-made goods an energetic committee to present to legislatures now in session the need for such legislation in preparation for the Hawes-Cooper Act, which goes into effect in January, 1934.

John R. Cranor, General Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Industrial School at Huntingdon, was a principal speaker in Philadelphia last month at the 146th annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Prison Society. The other speaker was Ernest Jerome Hopkins, who investigated third degree methods for the Wickersham Commission. Mr. Cranor stoutly defended the Huntingdon school's record as a reforming institution. He said in part, "A survey of 800 youths, released from Huntingdon over a period of years, showed more than sixty per cent of them earning their own living at the trade which they had been taught in the reformatory. The proportion who committed further crimes was comparatively quite small."

The Children's Bureau of the Federal Department of Labor and the Federal Census Bureau are seeking the cooperation of State Welfare Departments to insure greater accuracy in the collection of statistics relative to dependent and neglected children. Miss Mary S. Labaree recently conferred with representatives of the two bureaus in Washington in formulating plans for the decennial census to be taken by the Bureau of Census October 1, 1933. New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania were represented at the conference. Plans for the compilation of these statistics in Pennsylvania will be laid to coincide with the work of the Federal Census Bureau to enable the assembling of more comprehensive statistical data.

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doctors, nurses, public officials and social workers throughout the State. Predisposition to tuberculosis, stunted physiques, susceptibility to influenza and bronchitis through reduced vitality—these are the price of living standards pushed below a decent minimum."

Crime and delinquency in communities of extreme destitution has increased. The Bureau of Restoration reports a considerable increase in prison population. Pennsylvania has hardly touched the problem of transient families and homeless men and boys. Thousands of men are constantly drifting through our towns. Some of our distressed communities cannot even feed this horde of wanderers, but send them on hungry to other towns equally distressed and equally unable to meet their needs. The growing number of young boys, hungry, tired, broken in spirit, presents the most tragic group in this legion of the homeless.

The charge has been made that we are producing problem children today more rapidly than we can possibly care for them. Unemployment is costing the citizens of this State not only millions of dollars but also thousands of broken and ruined lives of children of both this and the succeeding generation.

The Department of Welfare has loaned several of its staff members and has furnished service in emergencies requiring workers skilled in community organization. Demands of local communities for guidance in meeting emergency problems have almost doubled the work of the Department.

Institutes on proper administration of relief, sponsored by the Department, have been an outstanding service to county groups interested in far-sighted relief measures. The cooperation of the Pennsylvania Conference on Social Welfare and the Public Charities Association of Pennsylvania have made available the services of leaders in the field of social welfare to conduct group discussions.

REVIEWING OUR WORK

THE ultimate economy of modern preventive welfare work runs like a motif through the Sixth Biennial Report of the Secretary of Welfare. Beginning with a brief summary of the progress of unemployment emergency work, the Report presents statements concerning the State Welfare Commission; five bureaus—Accounting, Assistance, Children, Mental Health and Restoration; the Divisions of Mothers' Assistance, Prison Labor, and Research and Statistics; the Council for the Blind; the Orthopaedic Unit; the Alcohol Permit Board and the advisory field services—including the Agriculturist and the Interracial, Nursing, and Nutrition Consultants.

Following the wide range of Department activities, the Report covers a broad field. Bootlegging babies—fifty blind beggars—seventy eggs per hen per year—transforming lunatic asylums—are phrases that catch the eye as one glances through the pages.

In response to appeals for economy the Report was cut down to 66 pages. This meant elimination of many tables and charts showing growth and standards of work in institutions, clinics, foster homes for children and other phases of the Department's work. A limited edition of a mimeographed supplementary report has been run off. It consists of nine charts, a spot map of State institutions and 39 statistical tables. The two reports will cost fifteen cents, and may be had by writing to the Division of Documents, Bureau of Publications, Harrisburg.

It is hoped that the findings of the Conference on Maintenance of Welfare Standards, recently held at the University of Chicago, will have an effect on the 40 State Legislatures meeting this winter. All are faced with critical situations of unemployment and relief. Mrs. Alice F. Liveright, as chairman of the Committee on Adequacy of Relief, in making her report listed the following as the essential functions: food; shelter; heat and light; clothing; medical care; cash, and organization.

Movement of Population in Institutions by Groups, July to December, 1932*

STATE	July	August	September	October	November	December
Penal	6,512	6,475	6,440	6,495	6,530	6,490
Admitted during month	169	122	293	230	197	234
Discharged during month	206	157	238	195	237	323
Mentally Diseased	14,165	14,218	14,255	14,296	14,324	14,369
Admitted during month	309	292	264	283	251	257
Discharged during month	219	228	206	235	193	235
Mentally Defective	5,973	5,884	5,930	6,028	6,044	6,060
Admitted during month	50	41	37	27	33	43
Discharged during month	28	27	26	20	17	32
Epileptic	362	352	350	351	363	361
Admitted during month	6	10	5	7	12	4
Discharged during month	3	1	3	0	4	2
AGGREGATE—STATE	27,012	26,929	26,975	27,170	27,261	27,280
COUNTY						
Mentally Diseased	13,410	13,500	13,531	13,549	13,592	13,600
Admitted during month	314	299	283	266	248	289
Discharged during month	207	264	207	242	217	318
County Prisons	8,763	8,558	8,852	8,904	9,242	8,919
Admitted during month	9,728	10,231	10,659	10,831	8,669	8,716
Discharged during month	9,933	9,937	10,607	10,493	8,992	9,415
Almshouses	8,285	8,519	8,575	8,872	9,095	9,289
Admitted during month	692	625	687	723	612	637
Discharged during month	458	569	501	512	427	493

*The first figure in each group of institutions represents the number in residence on the first day of the month.